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National Council selects speaker; Yahola to lead council

OKMULGEE — The 13th session of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council elected Tukvptce District Representative Thomas Yahola to the lead the 26-member legislative body for the next two years.

Yahola defeated Wagoner/Rogers/Mayes/ District representative Barbara Gillespie, Creek District representative George Tiger, and McIntosh District representative Tom Pickering.



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Chief Justice Amos McNac, right, swears in Thomas Yahola as speaker of the National Council.

Wagoner/Rogers/Mayes/ District representative Berryhill, of Coweta, defeated Creek District Representative Roger Barnett, of Bristow and David Nichols of Okmulgee was selected as sergeant-at-arms.

The following is a list of the National Council committees and members: Business & Governmental-Sandra Parish, Shirlene Ade, Anthony Notaro, Rita Williams, Ron Cleghorn, Richard Berryhill, and Roger Barnett; Tribal Affairs-Barbara Gillespie, Billy Chalakee, Jesse Kelley, Sue Johnson, Thomas McIntosh, and Sandra Golden; Community Services-Lola Fields, Lena Wind, Robert Jones, Duke Harjo, Tom Pickering, and David Nichols; Human Development-Larry Bible, Nancy Watson, Cherrah Quiett, Keeper Johnson, George Tiger, and Robert Hufft.

Tribe holds inauguration ceremony

OKMULGEE — A crowd of over 600 gathered at OSU/Okmulgee's Covelle Hall to witness the swearing in of A.D. Ellis into the office of principal chief at Saturday's inauguration ceremony.

Ellis, former second chief and national council representative, spoke on the direction his administration will take during his tenure as principal chief. Atop his list of priorities for the tribe includes economic development, education, and more employment opportunities for tribal citizens.

Ellis, who resides in Twin Hills, began his tribal political career at the age of 55 when he ran for a national council seat in 1991. He served as one of Okmulgee's district representative for four terms. In 1999, he ran for office of second chief and won a runoff election with current national council representative George Tiger.

During his term as second chief he was highly visible and active with tribal citizens and learned firsthand their needs and problems facing the Muscogee Nation.

"I never dreamed I'd be in this position," stated Ellis. "But the majority of Creek citizens wanted me to be here." In fact, Ellis made history by being the first chief candidate to receive over 51 percent (1905) of the votes during the primary election, deciding the office of principal chief without a general election race.

While serving as second chief, one of his responsibilities was to serve as a board member for the Muscogee Nation Business Enterprise (MNBE), a 8(a) company formed to pursue government and commercial contracts, specifically in the areas of telecommunications, construction services, and manufacturing.

Since its inception, MNBE purchased Complete Technology Concepts, a telecommunications company based in Texas, and secured a \$25 million contract between the United States Air Force, Altus Air Force Base and MNBE. Currently, MNBE has several job proposals pending. "Since February, we went from zero to 48 employees," stated Ellis.

Chief Ellis was also very adamant about working with the current National Council and tribally employed grantwriters to secure funding for construction of a multipurpose center on the grounds of the Claude Cox



Muscogee (Creek) Nation Chief Justice Amos McNac, right, swears in A.D. Ellis as principal chief at Saturday's inauguration ceremony held at OSU/Okmulgee.

Omniplex. According to Ellis, the multipurpose building would house a gymnasium and a dialysis center.

Ellis also spoke about the foundation laid by former Chief R. Perry Beaver. Back in July, Beaver announced plans for a multimillion dollar hotel and entertainment complex, which includes the largest gaming center in the state, generating employment opportunities for our citizens. The OSU system and the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe formed a joint venture to develop a tribal college designed to serve the unique higher education needs of all Native Americans in Oklahoma, with eight slots promised to Creek nursing students each semester.

At the end of his speech, Ellis used an analogy of a bus and its passengers. Stated Ellis, "In order to move forward, we have to get the right people on the the bus and the wrong people off the bus." By the roaring ovation Ellis received before and after his speech, the tribal citizens have faith in Ellis as the driver of the bus.

Muscogee National Council overview

OKMULGEE — The following consists of actions of the Muscogee (Creek) National Council conducted at the October 7, extraordinary session.

October 7, extraordinary session

Absent were: **Judy Aaron**, Creek District; **Tom Pickering**, McIntosh District; **Thomas McIntosh**, McIntosh District; **Sandra Parish**, Muskogee District; **Nancy Watson**, Okfuskee District; **Dave Lewis**, Okmulgee District; **David Nichols**, Okmulgee District; **Thomas Yahola**, Tukvptce District; **Lola Fields**, Tukvptce District; **Larry Bible**, Tulsa District; **Ron Cleghorn**, Tulsa District; and **Robert Hufft**, Tulsa District;

Speaker **Wilbur Gouge**, McIntosh District, conducted the meeting and did not vote.

In order of business the Council:

- approved as amended (16-0-0) TR 03-095, authorizing the Principal Chief to execute a contract for the purchase of property located in Tulsa County, Oklahoma;
- approved (16-0-0) NCA 03-187, appropriating funds for the purchase of real property in Wagoner County, Oklahoma to be used for economic development purposes;
- approved (16-0-0) NCA 03-195, appropriating funds for the purchase of real property in Wagoner County, Oklahoma to be used for economic development purposes;
- approved (16-0-0) NCA 03-196, amending NCA 90-13, as amended by NCA 95-84 extending the deadline for grant proposals by chartered Creek Indian communities for fiscal year 2003 funds;

Oct. 21 special session

absent were: **Sandra Parish**, Muskogee; **Dave Lewis**, Okmulgee; **Keeper Johnson**, Okmulgee; **Dwayne Lowe**, Tukvptce; **Larry Bible**, Tulsa; **Robert Hufft**, Tulsa;

Speaker **Wilbur Gouge**, McIntosh District, conducted the meeting and did not vote.

a quorum was not established and no business was conducted;

October 25, quarterly session

absent were: **Judy Aaron**, Creek district; **Dave Lewis**, Okmulgee district; **Dwayne Lowe**, Tukvptce district; **Larry Bible**, Tulsa district; and **Robert Hufft**, Tulsa district;

Judy Aaron arrived before any business was taken; veto message:

- veto (9-13-0) NCA 03-151, creating language revitalization and establishing the Mvskoke language division;

voting no were: **Roger Barnett**, Creek District; **Wilbur Gouge**, McIntosh District; **Sandra Parish**, Muskogee District; **Daniel Wind**, Muskogee District; **Mae Jackson**, Okfuskee District; **Sandra Golden**,

Okfuskee District; **Keeper Johnson**, Okmulgee District; **George Almerigi**, Okmulgee District; **David Nichols**, Okmulgee District; **Thomas Yahola**, Tukvptce District; **Lola Fields**, Tukvptce District; **Richard Berryhill**, Wagoner District; and **Barbara Gillespie**, Wagoner District;

Order of business:

- approved (21-0-0) TR 03-079, authorizing the Muscogee (Creek) Nation business enterprise board to execute an attorney agreement between the Muscogee (Creek) Nation business enterprise board and **Steve Pazzo**;

- approved as amended (13-8-0) TR 03-094, confirming the nomination of **Victoria Lee** to serve as the director for the division of health administration;

voting no were: **Aaron**, Creek; **Warrington**, Creek; **Parish**, Muskogee; **Watson**, Okfuskee; **Jackson**, Okfuskee; **Golden**, Okfuskee; **Quiett**, Tulsa; and **Gillespie**, Wagoner;

- approved (21-0-0) TR 03-098, approving the selection of contractors for projects 51-80, Turnkey new construction;

• approved (21-0-0) TR 03-100, approving the selection of contractors for rehabilitation of twenty-four (24) vacant Okmulgee low rent apartments, total rehabilitation to one (1) vacant mutual home help home, major foundation repair for one (1) home and rehabilitation of one (1) mutual help home;

representative **Daniel Wind** was recorded absent;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-148, repealing NCA 01-228 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation amending NCA 92-109 (an ordinance of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation adopting a physical plant maintenance & capital improvement policy), as amended by NCA 97-81);

- approved (17-3-0) NCA 03-155, amending certain provisions of the gaming code, NCA 01-183, ??? 202, 203, 309, 403 and 506 and adding section 525 to chapter five regarding the acceptance of things of value by the commissioner, OPG employees, GOAB and their employees and chartered Indian communities and their employees;

voting no were: **Aaron**, Creek; **Parish**, Muskogee; and **Almerigi**, Okmulgee;

- approved (12-8-0) NCA 03-166, authorizing a special appropriation to the Mvskoke language institute;

voting no were: **Aaron**, Creek; **Warrington**, Creek; **Watson**, Okfuskee; **Jackson**, Okfuskee; **Golden**, Okfuskee; **Johnson**, Okmulgee; **Fields**, Tukvptce; and **Gillespie**, Wagoner;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-179, amending NCA 99-10, as amended by NCA 02-107, ad amended by NCA 03-012, as amended by NCA 03-077, regarding the enterprise's budgetary and financial requirements;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-182, amending NCA 01-158 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing an appropriation for the burial assistance under established guidelines and to repeal NCA 89-130, NCA 91-56 and NCA 92-147) as amended by NCA 02-085, as amended by NCA 03-158, to established a limitation of burial assistance funds available to tribal citizens in certain circumstances;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-185, amending NCA 01-185 as codified in title 4 of the code of laws of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, entitled "burial/cemeteries", related to burial assistance guidelines as amended by NCA 02-085 and NCA 03-158;

representative **David Nichols** was out of seat at time of casting of vote;

- approved (19-0-0) NCA 03-192, amending NCA 01-12 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation enacting a new law governing the enactment and codification of legislation and repealing NCA 96-96), ??? 1-115 and 1-116, related to the appropriation for publication costs and related to sales and distribution of the code of laws of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-193, amending NCA 01-12 (a law of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation enacting a new law governing the enactment and codification of legislation and repealing NCA 96-96), ??? 1-115 and 1-116, related to the appropriation for publication costs and related to sales and distribution of the code of laws of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-194, amending NCA 96-66 (an ordinance of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation authorizing and appropriating funds for rural volunteer fire departments within the Muscogee Nation) as amended by NCA 00-115;

- approved (20-0-0) NCA 03-202, authorizing the expenditure of tribal court's enhancement grant from the United States of America department of justice;

- died on the floor (20-0-0) NCA 03-203, requiring oversight by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation tribal construction engineer of all construction or capital improvements occurring on Muscogee (Creek) Nation property;

- approved as amended (20-0-0) NCA 03-204, authorizing a special appropriation to the Mvskoke nation honor guard to attend the Vietnam wall experience in Macon, Georgia, October 30 – November 2, 3003;

- died in council (20-0-0) NCA 03-058, authorizing an appropriation of matching funds to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation vocational rehabilitation program.



Judge Amos McNac, far right, swears in the newly elected 2004 National Council Representatives. photo by Gerald Wofford

Births

Kali Anthony Allen

TULSA — Kali Anthony Allen was born October 3 at Peggy Helmerich Women's Health Center to Kali and Melissa Allen of Tulsa.

He weighed 7 pounds and 10 ounces and was 19 inches in length.

Maternal grandparents are Artman and Irene Tiger of Owasso.

Paternal grandparents are Milton and Melissa Allen of Broken Arrow.

Maternal great grandparents are the late Rev. C.D. and Marie Harjo of Okemah and Jim and the late Rachel Gutierrez of Bristow.

Paternal great grandparents are the late George and Aloyse Allen of New Haven, Connecticut.

Allen has one sister, Sarayl.



Allen

Joshua Don Johnson

FT. WORTH — Joshua Don Johnson was born July 3 to Angelique Lynn Cook and Tommy Joe Johnson of Azle, Texas.

Maternal grandfather is Jerry Michael Cook. Maternal great grandmother is Pauline Lowe and his great-great grandfather is John Lowe.



Johnson

Ladybugs take third in tournament

DEWAR — The Ladybugs placed third in the 1st Annual All-Indian Warrior's Showcase Shootout Basketball Tournament held Thanksgiving weekend.

The team received a team plaque and t-shirts for their efforts. Richard and Shelia Buckley of Okmulgee coached the seven and eight year old team. Team members included the following: Katelyn Harjo, Jasmine Buckley, Audrie Billie, Taiah Giger, Makayla Blackbear, Hannah Gouge, and Stacy Barrett.



Dakota James July

TULSA — Dakota James July was born Dec. 3 at Hillcrest Medical Center to Thomas Evan and Rachael July of Glenpool.

He weighed 8 pounds and 1 ounce and was 20 inches in length.

Maternal grandparents are Faith Watashe and Richard Barnett.

Paternal grandparents are Sauce and Florence July.



July

Birthdays

Ezekiel Thomas Cook

FT. WORTH — Ezekiel Thomas Cook celebrated his second birthday on January 24.

He is the son of Angelique Lynn Cook and Tommy Joe Johnson.

Maternal grandfather is Jerry Michael Cook. Maternal grandmother is Pauline Lowe and maternal great-grandfather is John Lowe.

Cook has one sister, Charolette.



Cook

Lance Geebon Nicholas Gouge

HENRYETTA — Lance Geebon Nicholas Gouge celebrated his second birthday on January 3.

He is the son of Geebon and Jenna Gouge of Henryetta.

Paternal grandparents are the late Lutie Sue Gouge and Thompson Sr. and Shirley Gouge of Lookeba.

Maternal grandparents are Karen and Joe Robertson of Beggs and John and Mary Boyce of Tulsa.

He is a member of the Lookeba tribal town.

Lance has two sisters, Hannah and Maddie.



Gouge

Lorene Hicks

OKEMAH — Lorene Hicks celebrated her 80th birthday on December 6 with friends and relatives at the Okfuskee Indian Community Center.

She has eight children, twenty grandchildren, and twenty-one great-grandchildren.

Dewar girl celebrates eighth birthday

DEWAR — Alissa Callie Taylor celebrated her eighth

birthday on December 13 with a sleepover party.

Taylor turned eight on December 14.

Alissa is the daughter of Lucas and Stefanie Taylor of Dewar.

Maternal grandparents are Richard and the late Louise Pulliam of Dewar.

Paternal grandparents are the late Walter Taylor and Sally Taylor of Henryetta.

She is the great granddaughter of Richard and Anne Pulliam of Dewar; the late Marchie Taylor and the late Lizzie Tiger of Ryal Community; and Edna Mitchell of Henryetta.

She is a member of Hickory Ground #1 Baptist Church. She currently attends Henryetta Elementary School.



Taylor

Society

Weidner joins Pediatric Surgery

HANOVER, New Hampshire — Dr. Bryan C. Weidner was recently appointed assistant professor by Kirby I. Bland, MD, professor and chairman of the UAB Department of Surgery and Keith E. Georgeson, MD, professor and director of the Division of Pediatric Surgery.

He graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College, where he was a Rufus Choate Scholar and elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He completed medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

He served his surgical internship and residency at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, where he was also chief resident and twice honored with the American Medical Student Association Golden Apple Award.

During his surgical critical care fellowship at Duke, Dr. Weidner was an attending general surgeon at the Durham Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, as well as an emergency department physician at the Asheville VA Medical Center.

He subsequently served a pediatric surgery fellowship at Children's Hospital and Medical Center, University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, where he was honored with the Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award. This was the first award ever presented to a surgical fellow by the University of Washington Pediatrics Residency Program.

Among his personal interests and activities, Dr. Weidner is a private pilot with the aerobatic training and, in 1995, completed the Marine Corps Marathon.



Weidner

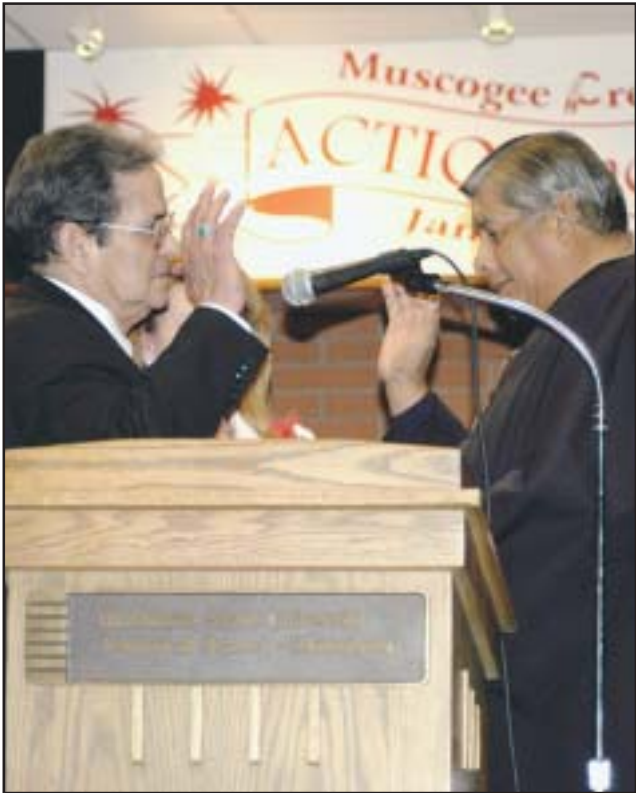


Mvsoke Nation Honor Guard



James Proctor, leading the friendship dance.

Photos taken by the Communications Dept



Amos McNac swearing in Principal Chief Ellis



Victory Stompdance



California Fixico, Martha Berryhill, Charlie Coker, and Tom Moore enjoy the 2004 inauguration



Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard stand at attention during the singing of the national anthem.



Muscogee Creek elders, including two original allottees, enjoy the inauguration ceremonies.



Amos McNac, congratulates Second Chief Berryhill



Second Chief Alfred Berryhill with his son Greg.



Second Chief; son, Greg; niece, Tonya Scott and brother, Bob King pose for a picture

Social services announces field site dates

OKMULGEE — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Social Services Department is accepting applications for Native Americans needing assistance with basic living needs (shelter and utility expenses) at field sites in: Eufaula; Holdenville; Okemah; Muskogee; and Sapulpa.

The field sites and dates are:

- Okemah Indian Community Center, 1100 S. Woody Guthrie St. — applications will be accepted from 9 to 11 a.m., Jan. 21 and Feb. 4.

- Eufaula Indian Community Center, 800 Forest Ave. — applications will be accepted from 9 to 11 a.m., Feb. 5 & 19.

- Sapulpa Indian Health Center, 1125 E. Cleveland — applications will be accepted from 1 to 3 p.m., Feb. 5 & 19.

- Holdenville Indian Community Center, 224 E. Poplar — applications will be accepted from 9 to 11 a.m., Jan. 20 and Feb. 3 & 17 and

- Muskogee Indian Community Center, 111 S. Virginia — applications will be accepted from 1 to 3 p.m., Feb. 3.

If there are any questions, you may contact social services at the following: 1-800-482-1979 or (918)756-8700 ext. 7619 or 7620.

Applications being taken for the LIHEAP assistance

OKMULGEE — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Social Services has received additional funds for the energy program, LIHEAP, and will begin taking applications on January 12.

This is for those who have not received heating assistance from this office or other agencies or communities in the past year.

Applicants must provide a copy of: heating bill; tribal enrollment or CDIB cards; social security cards; and proof of income for all members of the household.

If there are any questions, you may contact social services at the following: 1-800-482-1979 or (918)756-8700 ext. 7619 or 7620.

Eufaula Dormitory is selling t-shirts

EUFAULA — The Eufaula Dormitory seniors are selling t-shirts to raise money for their senior trip.

The t-shirts are \$10. All Eufaula dormitory alumni, former students and parents of students are encouraged to help support the students.

The shirts will be white, with black lettering, that says "Eufaula Dormitory" with a Native American picture. A contest for the design on the t-shirt was won by Shane Harjo.

If you would like to buy a shirt please call (918) 689-2522 or 1-800-896-3181. All orders must be prepaid.

Wild Onion dinner and bingo

OKEMAH — A wild onion dinner and benefit bingo, sponsored by Sam Proctor and B.J. Jackson, will be held on January 31 at the tribal town center.

Food sale starts at 11:30 a.m. and wild onion dinners are \$5.00 each. The dinner includes wild onions, beans,

meat and fry bread. The grocery and special bingo starts at 1 p.m.

Drawings will be held for shell-shaker cans made by B.J. Jackson and yarn belts made by Leon Bell.

For more information call (405) 786-2950 or (918) 656-3615.

Creek Nation finance department receives award

CHICAGO— The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR).

The certificate of achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

An award of financial reporting achievement has been awarded to the individual(s), department or agency designated by the government as primarily responsible for preparing the award winning CAFR. This has been presented to R. Perry Beaver, Principal Chief.

The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 14,000 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago, Illinois and Washington, D.C.

Center offers program for mental health professionals

OKLAHOMA CITY— Mental health professionals interested in learning how to help Native American children who are victims of physical and sexual abuse are encouraged to apply for Project Making Medicine, a program taught through the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Project Making Medicine, which incorporates Native American traditional practices and cultural teachings, requires a 12 month training commitment. Funding is available for training, which includes two weeks of intensive training at the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City, phone consultation and a two-day training event at the trainee's site.

The project provides specialized clinical approaches for physically and sexually abused children that include: the treatment of adolescent sex offenders; children with sexual behavioral problems; and parent-child interaction therapy.

Participants will be provided training in clinical supervision and consultation to assist other professionals and tribal programs. Each participant will enhance his or her clinical skills, acquire strategies and identify resources to be a child advocate in his or her community.

For more information and to apply for the 2004 program, contact project leaders Dolores Subia BigFoot, director of the Native American programs and assistant professor of research in the Department of Pediatrics at the OU Health Sciences Center, or Lorena Burris, a post-doctoral research fellow in the Department of Pediatrics at the OU Health Sciences Center, at (405) 271-8858 or dee-bigfoot@ouhsc.edu or lorena-burris@ouhsc.edu. Application deadline is March 12.

Inauguration video and photographs available

OKMULGEE — The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Communications Department will be selling a video, DVD, and 8 x 10 and 5 x 7 glossy prints of the 2004 Inauguration Ceremony.

Photos of the 2004 Inauguration will be on display in the main tribal complex. Photos will be offered as a full 8 x 10 or two 5 x 7's.

The department will also offer a commemorative package that will include the following; DVD; Inauguration program; an invitation; one 8 x 10 print of the newly elected National Council; and a 5 x 7 glossy print of the chief and second chief's swearing in.

A photo video of the entire ceremony for viewing on a computer DVD player will also be offered in February. For more information, contact the communications department at (918) 732-7637.

**1st Annual All-Indian
March Madness
Tournament
March 18 - 20
Dewar Gymnasium
\$100
Deadline is March 1
NO HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS
Ages 15 - 18
16 Team Limit (8 Boys & 8 Girls)
8 Player Roster
3 Game Guarantee
1st - 3rd Place Team Trophies
All-Star Team
MVP
Outstanding Offensive Player
Outstanding Defensive Player
Slam Dunk, Hot Shot & 3-point contest
For more information contact Lucas
Taylor at (918) 732-7634.**

Spotlight



James makes Sequoyah gridiron history

by Gerald Wofford

Girls don't need to be playing football. They need to be at home curling their hair and practicing their cheers for the upcoming football game. That statement would work with most girls, but don't try telling that to a Muscogee (Creek) girl in Tahlequah, or you just might be wishing you were home curling your own hair.

Nancy James, a Sequoyah High School student, is a member of the high school football team. No, not a cheerleader or the person who gets the water for the team, James puts on the shoulder pads and straps on the helmet every Friday night in the fall. In fact, she is the first girl in the history of Sequoyah High School Football to do so.

But football isn't something she decided to try on a whim. She has been playing since the age of six, when she suited up for the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club Mighty Mite League in Tulsa. James was the first girl to play in the young league. When she reached elementary school level football, her fourth grade team captured the Indian Nations Championship. When she got older, she played for Hamilton Middle School. While at Hamilton, James played for two Creek Coaches by the name of Simon and Matt Harjo.

James could have stayed in the Tulsa area and attended any school in the area. But she decided to attend her father's alma mater, Sequoyah. While enrolling at Sequoyah High School, she decided to go out for the freshmen squad. After making being the first freshmen girl in Sequoyah High School history to make the freshmen squad, James decided to go out for the varsity football team as a sophomore.

"I knew it might be the biggest risk I would take in my sporting life," stated James. "After all, I was going to be first girl ever to try this sort of thing at Sequoyah."

And then of course, the issue of size comes into play. James with all her heart, was not a prototypical high school football athlete. She stood only at five feet tall and weighed in at 150 pounds. But one of her future teammates encourage her to do so.

"One of the guys on the varsity said he wanted to see me in a uniform this year,"

said James. "He told me to not give up." So James took the statement of her teammate as a challenge.



James

The final challenge in her mind was the acceptance from her teammates a member of the all boys football fraternity. But with the challenge from her teammate and others, the question of being accepted was no longer an obstacle. "The guys accepted me when I came out here," said James.

James has always been involved with some type of physical activity. She also plays basketball, softball, and volleyball. But football seems to be her favorite sport. She admits last year's play on the freshmen squad and this year's play on the varsity level is totally different.

"The players are definitely bigger and stronger," says James. "It physically is the difference between playing on the freshmen team and varsity team. Still, I'm glad I'm out here."

Although the team has fully accepted James's position on the team, there were a few skeptics at first. When interviewed by the *Muskogee Phoenix*, Lance Nells commented, "I thought it was crazy a girl would come out and try to play football. I began to think about it and thought it was about time. We've (team) heard for three years that girls wanted to play, but they never really tried it."

The Athletic Director at Sequoyah, Larry Grigg, also had some doubts about James desire to play hardball with the boys.

"I've said it before, if it was my daughter, I wouldn't let her play football, unless she was a kicker" says Grigg. "But the kids have really accepted her and the coaches have as well. Its not like its a circus deal in that it draws a lot of attention in a strange way."

The most important support she receives comes from her family. Her sister Sandy isn't a football player, but she has been a cheerleader for the Sequoyah Indians Football team. For Lila and Richard James, the mother and father

of Nancy, they couldn't be more proud. For Richard, who also played football at Sequoyah, he loves hearing the crowd yell Nancy's name. "I'm so full of joy when she does get to play," says Richard. "That's my baby out there!"

Shop talk with Gerald

Congratulations to the Sequoyah High School Boys Basketball team. The Indians fared very well in the *Tournament of Champions*. The tournament was held on the campus of Oral Roberts University inside the Mabee Center on December 29 through the 31st. The yearly tournament, which is put on by the Tulsa Public School System, invites area teams that are highly ranked or have won recent State championships to the three day event. It is a basketball fans heaven, watching the best in local high school cage action.

As mentioned earlier, Sequoyah did very well finishing second in a field of eight teams. The Sequoyah team, which is class 3A, lost to the highly ranked Bartlesville Bruins who are part of the 6A class. The Championship game was played on New Year's Eve. The Indians reached the finals by first defeating class 5A school East Central on Monday. The following night Sequoyah played 6A giant Tulsa Union on Tuesday. What a buildup on mascot attention Tuesday night's game must have been! The Indians verses the Redskins.

As in most basketball tournaments, no matter what region of the country, it is always interesting when a smaller school fares very well against the bigger schools they are playing in the tournament. It seems to capture the fans attention. That was part of the whole appeal of the film "Hoosiers". The Sequoyah team brought that appeal to the *Tournament of Champions*. And the fact that it (Sequoyah) was the only Native American School in the tournament was also extra special. The exciting finish to the Union game was proof that Sequoyah belonged there. The game, which went into overtime, saw five three pointers made in the last period by Sequoyah to force overtime play. The game went into overtime with an exciting last second three point shot at the top of the key by Solomon Horsechief. In overtime, the game battled back and forth till Sequoyah prevailed 66 to 64. Yet the local headlines from the state's second largest paper, *The Tulsa World*, only mentioned the thrilling game in a smaller print below the main headline, which announced the Bartlesville Bruins defeating the Memorial Chargers in the earlier game by a score of 48 to 37. Certainly a good game. Taking nothing away from the athletes that played in it, but as far as an action filled game which had to be determined by overtime and by five three pointers, Sequoyah should have received just a little bit more positive attention in this writer's opinion.

Three Muscogee (Creek) players make up the talented Sequoyah Indians Basketball team. They are Justin Marshall from Eufaula, and brothers Ryan and Trevor Taryole who are from Glenpool. Remember to keep us informed of our tribal citizens who shine on the playing field.

Creek Athlete ends Sooner career

NORMAN — The loss to the Tigers in the Sugar Bowl took away any chance of Oklahoma claiming a National Championship for the year that was 2003. And with the loss on January 4 in the Louisiana Superdome, comes the end of a college football career for many Sooner greats. Players, such as Derrick Strait, Brandon Everage, and Teddy Lehman, will leave behind a hard to fill presence on the football field. Others, such as Lombardi winner Tommie Harris and Dan Cody, are considering leaving early and entering the NFL Draft.

For Muscogee (Creek) citizen and Sooner football player Matt McCoy, the dreams of a multimillion dollar professional football contract is not waiting in the wings. McCoy, a Business Administration Major, completed all college courses in December to earn his degree and participated in winter graduation ceremonies at the University of Oklahoma. He plans to marry Rachel Jeffries later this month in Oklahoma City.

McCoy has seen the ups and downs of a major college football career during his time at OU. First recruited by ex-Sooner Coach John Blake, only to see the Blake era come to an immediate halt with his firing in 1998.

McCoy sees the hiring of Bob Stoops and a new

level in Sooner lore will be reached.

McCoy sees the Sooners play the likes of Notre Dame and return to a bowl game that ushers in a new millennium. The team's first bowl appearance in 5 years. The season ends with a disappointing loss to Mississippi in the Independence Bowl, but the stage is now set for bigger things.

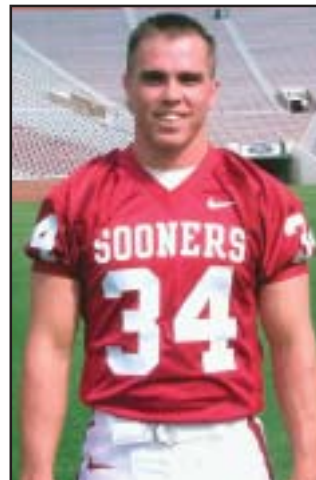
McCoy is a part of a magical year that saw the Sooners elevate themselves back to national prominence by winning the 2000 National Championship. McCoy and the Sooners defeat Florida State in the Orange Bowl by a score of 13 to 2 and finish the season with a perfect 13-0 record.

He also saw the Sooners participate in their first Rose Bowl and defeated Washington State 34-14.

McCoy will take with him individual memories of throwing the game winning touchdown against Missouri and an interception in the Cotton Bowl. However, this year's win against Oklahoma State is his sweetest individual win in his career in Norman.

"As a team, winning the National Championship was the greatest," says McCoy. "As an individual, I would say beating Oklahoma State this year."

McCoy plans to reside in Tulsa and begin his business career with his father at State Farm Insurance.



McCoy

Former Golden gloves champ reflects on boxing career

OKEMAH — Back in nineteen seventy-two, Rocky Pigeon decided to take up boxing. It wasn't easy making it to his first fight. He had to hitchhike from his home in Okemah just to get there.

"I had heard of a boxing tournament going on in Henryetta," said Pigeon, referring to the Golden Gloves Tournament that was being held there at the time. "I wanted to fight. I wanted to see what it was like. Who is the first person the officials match me up with in the tournament? None other than the state Champion. I fought him. I lost, but I fought him."

The bout gave Pigeon even more determination to succeed in the ring. He decided to give this rather unique sport more effort and dedication. But it would still take some time, in fact, Pigeon would lose his first 10 amateur bouts before even claiming a victory. But the seed

had already been planted for his love to become a fighter.

In a year's time he would fight again in the Golden Gloves, this time in Eufaula against the same opponent. This time Pigeon would turn the tables defeating the opponent who had given him his first loss.

Pigeon continued with the sport and began to claim some championships of his own, winning the Golden Gloves State Middleweight Championship in 76 and 80. From there, Pigeon would serve a stint in the United States Marines, and make the all service team three years in a row.

Pigeon would fight at the welter and middle-weight divisions. He qualified for the U.S. Olympic trials, the same year that Michael and Leon Spinks and became acquainted with the brothers.

When Pigeon wasn't fighting in the ring, he was also playing other sports, his love for football gave him an opportunity to play for the Dallas Cowboys during a strike-shortened season in the NFL. "I did get to play in one game against Houston," (Oilers) said Pigeon. "We won that game, and it was a lot of fun meeting people like Coach Tom Landry."

If anyone is interested in taking up boxing or needs training instruction, contact Rocky at (918) 623-0485.



Pigeon